

The best approach

Experts debate youth health

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"If an uncoordinated kid who can't walk and chew gum at the same time is thrown into a sports activity and fails, the implication is that they're a failure."

"Well you can be terribly uncoordi-

nated and still be physically fit. You don't have to be a great athlete. It's a major problem in our high schools in my philosophy."

The fact that coaches are hired and fired based on their win-loss records only fuels the problem, Arends said.

"Coaches know that's the bottom line, so they don't care about the rest of the kids," he said.

Arends espouses a basic education program that involves 100-percent participation with the next step being an intramural program and third — and

last — an interscholastic sports program.

"But physical educators don't want to stop playing games. They consider it recreation. Well when you're 23 and you get home from work, it's kind of hard to find someone willing to play dodge ball with you," Arends said.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

In addition to kids physical-fitness classes offered by Junior America, the center features parent-child classes on weekends and is planning pro- and post-natal sessions for moms.

Tamra Paul leads her class during a series of exercises. There are a total of 54 students enrolled in fitness classes at Junior America.

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